

## The idea that something like this could happen to my child is completely overwhelming. What can I do to cope with my own feelings?

If you suspect that your child has been abused, try to get support by talking to someone else before talking to your child about the sexual abuse. If your child has already disclosed the abuse, hearing the details may be profoundly upsetting to you, particularly if the abuser is someone you know and thought you could trust. (For more information on such “intrafamilial” sexual abuse, see the National Child Traumatic Stress Network’s factsheet, *Coping with the Shock of Intrafamilial Sexual Abuse: Information for Parents and Caregivers*, available at [http://nctsn.org/nctsn\\_assets/pdfs/caring/intrafamilialabuse.pdf](http://nctsn.org/nctsn_assets/pdfs/caring/intrafamilialabuse.pdf).)

Your feelings may range from denial, anger, and sadness, to frustration and helplessness. If you yourself are a survivor of child sexual abuse, the discovery that your child has been abused may also bring up your own painful and unresolved feelings and memories. Getting help for yourself is an important part of being able to get help and support for your child. You can contact the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN) at 1-800-656-HOPE or [www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org) for help finding support in your area. The U.S. Department of Justice’s Office for Victims of Crime (<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/>) has resources and a web forum to communicate with others on topics such as child abuse, victim’s rights, court preparation, and more.



### Books That Can Help

Adams, C., & Fay, J. (1992). *Helping your child recover from sexual abuse*. Vancouver, WA: University of Washington Press.

Brohl, K., & Potter, J.C. (2004). *When your child has been molested: A parents’ guide to healing and recovery*. (Revised ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, A Wiley Imprint.

Daugherty, L. (2006) *Why me? Help for victims of child sexual abuse (even if they are adults now)*. (4th ed.). Roswell, NM: Cleanan Press, Inc.

## References

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2. London, K., Bruck, M., Ceci, S.J., & Shuman, D.W. (2005). Disclosure of child sexual abuse. What does the research tell us about the ways that children tell? *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, *11* (1), 194-226.
3. Paredes, M., Leifer, M., & Kilbane, T. (2001). Maternal variables related to sexually abused children’s functioning, *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *25* (9), 1159-1176.
4. Lovett, B.B. (2004). Child sexual abuse disclosure: Maternal response and other variables impacting the victim. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, *21* (4), 355-371.

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